Instructor
Prof. Sebastian Deffner
Physics, Rm. 311
deffner@umbc.edu

Time and Place
We 3:30pm – 5:30pm
Physics 401

Office hours
Fr 10:00am – 12:00pm

Scope
Weekly colloquium of the Department of Physics.

Dates
• First day of class: February 06, 2019
• Last day of class: May 08, 2019

Course Objectives and Learning Goals
The objective of this course is to attend and follow the scientific presentations in the weekly colloquium of the Department of Physics. Goal is to “broaden the horizon” and get exposure to the big questions of cutting edge research.

Course Format
The seminar consists of three parts: (i) attendance of the colloquium, (ii) attendance of the Q&A-sessions with the speakers, and (iii) self-study and reflection on the discussed topics.

Assignments
After every colloquium written assignments are to be uploaded in blackboard. The deadline for submission is on Friday of the same week of the talk at midnight. The written assignments are to consist of a summary of the colloquium talk answering the following three questions:

• What was the talk about?
• Why is the topic interesting?

• What are the main results that were presented?

The written assignments are not to exceed 500 words!

Grades

Each assignment is graded as pass or fail. A fail is given for incorrect statements, incomplete summaries, insufficient reflection, and obvious plagiarism.

The final grade of the seminar is determined to be either pass or fail. To pass the course at least 11 talks will have to be attended, and 9 assignments will have be graded as pass. This grading scheme might appear rather generous. However, be aware of the fact that I will expect the written submissions to be on the highest academic level.

Incomplete is given only in exceptional cases. To be considered for an I, you must have attended at least 7 talks, submitted 7 assignments, of which at least 5 were graded as pass before incapacitation.

Academic Integrity

"By enrolling in this course, each student assumes the responsibilities of an active participant in UMBC’s scholarly community in which everyone’s academic work and behavior are held to the highest standards of honesty. Cheating on a test could result in disciplinary action that may include, but is not limited to, suspension or dismissal.” More on the requirements of academic integrity can be found at http://www.umbc.edu/gradschool/procedures/integrity.html

Applied to this course, a proven case of misconduct during an assignment or a blatant copy or plagiarism of a submission “earns” fail on the assignment in question. A second offense will result in failing the course.

On my end, I promise careful and timely grading, and openness.

Title IX

As an instructor, I am considered a Responsible Employee, per UMBC’s Policy on Prohibited Sexual Misconduct, Interpersonal Violence, and Other Related Misconduct. While my goal is for you to be able to share information related to your life experiences through discussion and written work, I want to be transparent that as a Responsible Employee I am required to report disclosures of sexual assault, domestic violence, relationship violence, stalking, and/or gender-based harassment to the University’s Title IX Coordinator.

As an instructor, I also have a mandatory obligation to report disclosures of or suspected instances of child abuse or neglect.

The purpose of these reporting requirements is for the University to inform you of options, supports and resources; you will not be forced to file a report with the police. Further, you are able to receive supports and resources, even if you choose to not want any action taken. Please note that in certain situations, based on the nature of the disclosure, the University may need to take action.

Disabilities

If you have any condition such as a physical or learning disability, which will make it difficult for you to carry out the work as described or which will require academic accommodations, please notify me ASAP, but definitely during the first two weeks of classes.